

SEQUENTIAL FULL COLOR DISPLAY AND PHOTOCELL DEVICE

Cross-Reference to Related Application

5 This application is related to a co-pending application entitled "COLOR
DISPLAY AND SOLAR CELL DEVICE," US Serial Number 10/205458 filed on
June 25, 2002, assigned to the assignee of the instant application.

Background

10 As multimedia applications become readily available in cellular
telephones and other handheld devices such as personal digital assistants and
ebooks, the power drain of the devices increases.

This increase in power drain has put a limit on the use of many
applications and is one of the challenges facing cellular handset makers. To
combat this problem in cellular telephones with monochrome liquid crystal
15 displays, the integration of a solar panel behind a STN display to collect
ambient light energy for either emergency or standby uses has been described,
for example, in the technical article "Photovoltaic Cell Integrated into an LCD"
published by the Society for Information Display in May, 2002 (Society of
Information Display Digest of Technical Papers, Vol XXXIII, No. 1, Page 190 -
20 193, Authors: Zili Li, P. Desai, D. Voloschenko, and M. Smith). This
supplementary power source is an integrated part of the monochrome display.
However, the monochrome display is rapidly being replaced by color displays,
so there is a need for supplementary power for telephones and other portable
devices with color displays.

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Brief Description of the Drawings

The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation
in the accompanying figures, in which like references indicate similar elements,
30 and in which:

FIG. 1 shows a combined elevation view of an embodiment of a full
color display and solar cell device **100** (herein simply referred to as a device
100) and an electrical block diagram of the device **100** and electrical
components, in accordance with the present invention

Skilled artisans will appreciate that elements in the figures are illustrated for simplicity and clarity and have not necessarily been drawn to scale. For example, the dimensions of some of the elements in the figures may be exaggerated relative to other elements to help to improve understanding of
 5 embodiments of the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Drawings

Before describing in detail the particular color display and solar cell in
 10 accordance with the present invention, it should be observed that the present invention resides primarily in combinations of method steps and apparatus components related to the full color display and solar cell. Accordingly, the apparatus components and method steps have been represented where appropriate by conventional symbols in the drawings, showing only those
 15 specific details that are pertinent to understanding the present invention so as not to obscure the disclosure with details that will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art having the benefit of the description herein.

FIG. 1 shows a combined elevation view of an embodiment of a full color display and solar cell device **100** (herein simply referred to as a device
 20 **100**) and an electrical block diagram of the device **100** and electrical components, in accordance with the present invention. The device **100** comprises a fast response liquid crystal display (LCD) **105**, a transparent panel light source **140** (also called simply a transparent panel light, and a photo cell **150**. The fast response LCD **105** (also called simply a liquid crystal display
 25 **105**) comprises a substantially transparent front plate **110**, an opposing substantially transparent back plate **120**, fast response liquid crystal material **130**, and electrodes (not shown in FIG. 1), and may comprise a front polarizer **125**, and a back polarizer **130**. The electrodes may be considered an integral part of the front and back plates **110**, **120**. The phrase "substantially
 30 transparent" means that the plate transmits at least 70 % of the infrared and visible light energy that is incident on the front plate **110**. For example, the front and back plates **110**, **120** can be clear glass which is typically at least 96% transmissive to visible light, exclusive of coatings such as the electrodes. Alternatively, the front and back plates **110**, **120** can be of substantially

transparent plastic, as is well known to one of ordinary skill in the art. Liquid crystal material **130** fills the space between these two plates **110** and **120** in accordance with well-understood prior art knowledge and technique. In this embodiment, the liquid crystal material **130** preferably comprises either

5 supertwisted nematic or twisted nematic liquid crystal material, in which case front and back polarizers are included in the fast response LCD **105**, but other liquid crystal material, such as cholesteric material, or polymer dispersed liquid crystal material could be used. When the liquid crystal material **130** is

10 cholesteric, then the fast response LCD **105** does not need to include the front and back polarizers **110**, **120**. Electrodes, such as transparent contacts (ITO), are placed on the front and back surfaces of LCD material **130** in a manner well known in the art to form a pattern, or array, of liquid crystal pixels between the front plate **110** and the back plate **120** of the fast response LCD **105**, which is to say that individual pixels are capable of being electronically controlled by a

15 conventional display control circuit (not shown in FIGs. 1-8) to determine an amount of rotation of linear polarized light passing therethrough, in a well known manner. The LCD **105** may be implemented as an active or passive liquid crystal display. The front polarizer **125** is shown in FIG. 1 as being located in front of the front plate **110**. It is preferably a linear polarizer that may

20 be bonded to the front plate. The front polarizer **125** may alternatively be located between the front plate **110** and the liquid crystal material **130**. The surface that is at the front of the LCD display is the front side (e.g., front surface of the polarizer **125** when it is in front of the front plate **110**). The back polarizer **135** is preferably a linear polarizer, and can be located substantially

25 parallel to and proximate the back plate **120** of the liquid crystal display panel, preferably behind and adjacent to the back plate **120** of the liquid crystal display panel. The back polarizer **135** can alternatively be located between the back plate **120** and the liquid crystal material **130**. The surface that is at the back of the fast response LCD **105** is the backside of the fast response LCD

30 **105** (e.g., the backside of the back polarizer **135** when it is behind the rear plate **120**). The fast response LCD **105** thus includes the substantially transparent front plate **110**, the opposing substantially transparent back plate **120**, the liquid crystal material **130**, and the electrodes, and may include the polarizers **125**, **135** regardless of which liquid crystal material **130** is used,

because the polarizers **125**, **135** may be added after the fast response LCD **105** is shipped by a fabricator. The fast response LCD **105** may include any number of other items included in conventional display panels, for example, a compensation plate. The fast response LCD **105** is of type that is designed to have a switching delay that is short enough so that one full color frame of information comprising three sub-color frames of monochromatic image information, can be presented at a rate of 25 frames per second with a contrast ratio adequate for an intended ambient light environment, when presented in synchronism with a sequential three color light that is emitted by the transparent panel light source **140**. Thus, it can be said that the fast response liquid crystal display (LCD) **105** is rated for at least 75 monochrome frames per second. To further reduce motion artifacts with moving images, a frame rate greater than 60 Hz is often used for a sequential type of full color display. By the same reasoning, the fast response monochromatic liquid crystal display **105** is preferably able to be operated at a sub-color frame rate of least 180 Hz.

The transparent panel light source **140** is preferably a panel light source that can emit a monochromatic (or narrow band) source of light selected to be one of three primary colors, with a significant portion **196** (e.g., at least approximately 50%, and more preferably, more than 90%) directed through the fast response LCD **105** toward the front of the device **100**. It is transparent, such that a substantial percentage (such as at least 50%) of ambient light **197** that is incident on the front of the transparent panel light source **140** passes to the photocell **150**, particularly when the light source **140** is off. It is described as a panel light source to emphasize that the light intensity is substantially uniform over the area of the fast response LCD **105**. The transparent panel light source **140** may be of any suitable technology that is transparent and provides a sequence of three monochromatic light beams of sufficient intensity to achieve the desired contrast ratio. For example, it may be a light pipe that guides light from a tri-color light, such as three monochromatic light emitters, to the back of the fast response LCD **105**. The emitters may, for example, be light emitting diodes, or lasers that emit light from what is essentially one of three point sources (in comparison to the fast response LCD array **106**). The light pipe then guides and spreads the light so that it is substantially uniform over the area of the fast response LCD **105**.

In an alternative embodiment, the transparent panel light source **140** is implemented using materials that are essentially transparent and that emit light directly from an area equivalent to the area of the fast response LCD array. An example of this type of transparent panel light source **140** would be a tri-color
5 transparent organic light emitting diode panel comprising either stacked transparent red, green, and blue layers of organic light emitting materials and transparent electrodes or a pixelated arrangement of red, green, and blue organic light emitting materials and transparent electrodes.

The photo cell **150** is disposed behind the fast response LCD **105**, and
10 a coupling layer **140** joins the photo cell **150** to the transparent panel light source **140**, which is likewise coupled to the back of the fast response LCD **105**. The coupling layer **140** can be, for example, comprised of an appropriate transparent adhesive material as appropriate to a particular application. If desired, and depending upon the area of the fast response LCD **105** and/or a
15 desired electrical configuration, multiple photo cells **150** can be utilized as suggested by phantom line **190**.

The photo cell **150** has a light receiving active surface as understood in the art. For most applications, the appearance of the device **100** will be enhanced if the light receiving active surface has a uniform appearance,
20 typically a dark-colored appearance, and a non-reflecting surface. For most applications, a black or substantially black colored non-reflecting surface will be optimum.

The device **150** may be coupled to a controller **160** and a power supply **170**. In some instances the device **150** may be fabricated for sale to include
25 the controller **160** and/or the power supply **170**. The controller **160**, for example, may comprise a single integrated circuit that includes embedded program instructions and input/output controls lines, may comprise a state machine, or may comprise a combination of portions of conventional microprocessor integrated circuits and other circuits, such as LCD display
30 driver circuits. The controller **160** is coupled to the electrodes of the fast response LCD **105** by signal **161**. The electrodes are conventional column and row matrixed electrodes for conducting electrical potentials of the signal **161** that control the transmissivity of each pixel. The controller **160** is also coupled to the transparent panel light source **140** by signal **162**, which causes the light

source to sequentially generate three essentially monochromatic light beams spread substantially uniformly over the area of the fast response LCD **105**, when the fast response LCD **105** is on. The controller **160** synchronizes the video information coupled to the fast response LCD **105** and the sequence of monochromatic light beams of three colors emitted by the transparent panel light source **140** at a rate such that human perception is that of a full color display, such as 25 frames per second, each frame comprising 3 monochrome frames. The video information is organized as three gray scale monochrome frames, each for one of the three colors emitted by the transparent panel light source **140**

Whether the fast response LCD **105** is on or off, it will be appreciated that a substantial portion of the light that is incident on the front of the fast response LCD **105** will pass through the polarizers **125**, **135**, the liquid crystal material **130**, the transparent panel light source **140** and the transparent panel light source **140**, emanating from the transparent light source **140** and entering the photo cell **150**, thereby generating supplemental power that is coupled to the power supply by signal **151**. The power is modified as appropriate so that it can be coupled back to the fast response LCD **105** by signal **171** and/or to a battery **180** by signal **181**, where it can be stored or distributed to other electronic components that may be in an apparatus that includes the device **100**. Examples of such apparatuses are cellular telephones, portable games, personal digital assistants, and other personal electronic apparatuses that run on batteries.

It will be further appreciated that when the fast response LCD **105** is on, a possible leakage of the energy in any light that is emitted by the light source towards the photocell **150** will also emanate from the transparent panel light source **140** and be converted to an electrical potential that can be used to recycle some of the lighting leakages and produce supplemental power. This leakage is preferably less than 10% of the light emitted by the transparent panel light source **140**.

A summary of some aspects of the present invention is that it is a full color display and photocell device that includes a liquid crystal display, a transparent panel light source behind the LCD that can emit a monochromatic light beam having a selected one of three colors, and a photovoltaic cell behind

the transparent panel light source that converts light energy emanating from the transparent panel light source into electrical energy.

In the foregoing specification, the invention and its benefits and advantages have been described with reference to specific embodiments.

5 However, one of ordinary skill in the art appreciates that various modifications and changes can be made without departing from the scope of the present invention as set forth in the claims below. Accordingly, the specification and figures are to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense, and all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of present
10 invention. The benefits, advantages, solutions to problems, and any element(s) that may cause any benefit, advantage, or solution to occur or become more pronounced are not to be construed as a critical, required, or essential features or elements of any or all the claims.

As used herein, the term "emanate", "emanating", or any other variation
15 thereof, refers to light that transmits through and out of a layer at a first side, or light that is being emitted by the layer out of the first side, or a mixture of both. The terms "comprises," "comprising," or any other variation thereof, are intended to cover a non-exclusive inclusion, such that a process, method,
20 article, or apparatus that comprises a list of elements does not include only those elements but may include other elements not expressly listed or inherent to such process, method, article, or apparatus. The terms "including" and/or "having", as used herein, are defined as comprising. The term "coupled", as used herein with reference to electro-optical technology, is defined as
25 connected, although not necessarily directly, and not necessarily mechanically.

The term "program", as used herein, is defined as a sequence of instructions designed for execution on a computer system. A "program", or "computer program", may include a subroutine, a function, a procedure, an
30 object method, an object implementation, an executable application, an applet, a servlet, a source code, an object code, a shared library/dynamic load library and/or other sequence of instructions designed for execution on a computer system.

What is claimed is: